

# News

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## PHILADELPHIA AREA WORKPLACE FATALITIES, 1999

Workplace fatalities totaled 97 in 1999, up 17 over the previous year in the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA), according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Alan M. Paisner, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that fatalities resulting from transportation-related deaths fell, although they were still the leading cause of workplace fatalities in the CMSA, accounting for 22 deaths or almost a quarter of the total. However, deaths due to contact with objects and equipment more than doubled from 1998 to 1999 rising to 21 fatalities. Assaults and violent acts, the third largest cause of fatalities on the job, rose over the year to 19 and accounted for one-fifth of all deaths. Homicides, which made up the majority of assaults and violent acts, were essentially the same as the previous year with 13 deaths. (See table A.)

Table A. Fatal occupational injuries for selected events, Philadelphia area, 1993-99

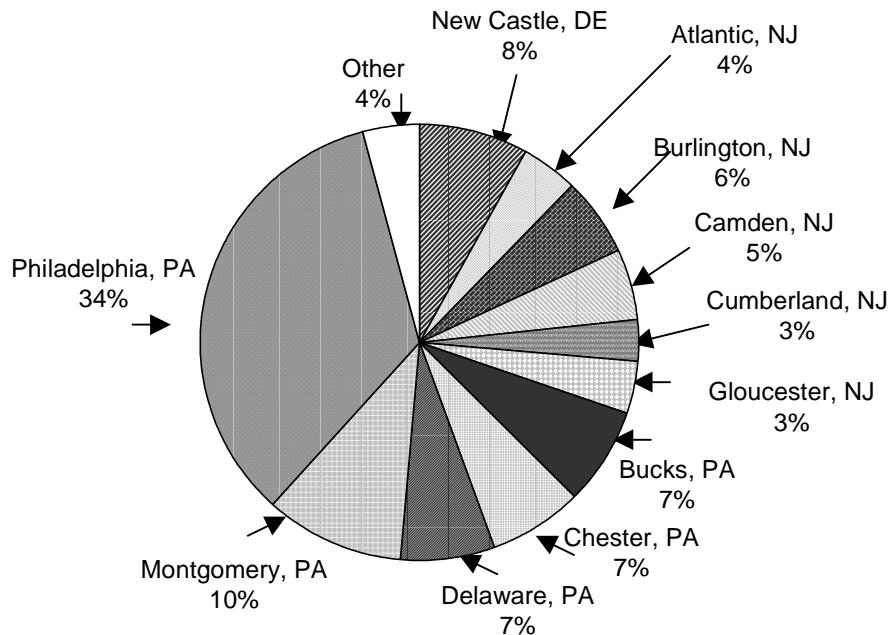
| Year               | Total fatalities | Transportation related |                  | Homicides |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
|                    |                  | Number                 | Percent of total | Number    | Percent of total |
| <b>Phila. CMSA</b> |                  |                        |                  |           |                  |
| 1993               | 127              | 38                     | 30               | 42        | 33               |
| 1994               | 99               | 30                     | 30               | 24        | 24               |
| 1995               | 97               | 29                     | 30               | 26        | 27               |
| 1996               | 119              | 26                     | 22               | 36        | 30               |
| 1997               | 102              | 37                     | 36               | 26        | 25               |
| 1998               | 80               | 32                     | 40               | 14        | 18               |
| 1999               | 97               | 22                     | 23               | 13        | 13               |
| <b>Phila. City</b> |                  |                        |                  |           |                  |
| 1993               | 46               | 6                      | 13               | 25        | 54               |
| 1994               | 32               | --                     | --               | 11        | 34               |
| 1995               | 30               | 4                      | 13               | 13        | 43               |
| 1996               | 46               | 6                      | 13               | 22        | 48               |
| 1997               | 37               | 11                     | 30               | 17        | 46               |
| 1998               | 23               | 4                      | 17               | 10        | 43               |
| 1999               | 33               | --                     | --               | 5         | 15               |

NOTE: Categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

With 33 workplace fatalities, the City of Philadelphia, accounted for about one-third of the CMSA total, up 10 from 1998. Still, the five workplace homicides in the city were half of the previous year's total and accounted for 38 percent of the CMSA homicides. The remaining fatalities were spread among the 14 surrounding counties with ten percent occurring in Montgomery, PA, eight percent in New Castle, DE, and seven percent each in the Pennsylvania counties of Bucks, Chester and Delaware. (See chart 1.)

Overall, job-related deaths in Pennsylvania fell 6 percent to 221 as 14 fewer workplace fatalities were reported than in 1998. The leading cause of work-related deaths in the State in 1999 was highway incidents, which accounted for one-fourth of the total.

Chart 1. Distribution of workplace fatalities by county of occurrence, Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD, CMSA, 1999



Nationwide, the number of fatal work injuries was 6,023, nearly the same as the previous year's total despite an increase in employment. On a detailed level, highway incidents continued as the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities during 1999, accounting for one-fourth of the fatal work injury total. Decreases in job-related deaths from homicides and electrocutions in 1999 were offset by increases from workers struck by falling objects or caught in running machinery. (See table B.)

Summary data show that transportation incidents, which includes highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water and rail fatalities, accounted for 43 percent of all fatal occupational injuries nationwide. Contact with objects and equipment, which includes struck by an object, caught in equipment and crushed in collapsing materials, made up 17 percent of on-the-job deaths while assaults and violent acts, which includes homicides and suicides, accounted for 15 percent. On average, about 17 workers were fatally injured each day in the United States during 1999.

Table B. Fatal occupational injuries for selected events, United States, 1993-99

| Year              | Total fatalities | Transportation related |                  | Homicides |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
|                   |                  | Number                 | Percent of total | Number    | Percent of total |
| 1993              | 6,331            | 2,499                  | 39               | 1,074     | 17               |
| 1994              | 6,632            | 2,762                  | 42               | 1,080     | 16               |
| 1995              | 6,275            | 2,587                  | 41               | 1,036     | 17               |
| 1996              | 6,202            | 2,601                  | 42               | 927       | 15               |
| 1997              | 6,238            | 2,605                  | 42               | 860       | 14               |
| 1998 <sup>1</sup> | 6,055            | 2,645                  | 44               | 714       | 12               |
| 1999              | 6,023            | 2,613                  | 43               | 645       | 11               |

<sup>1</sup>The BLS national news release issued August 4, 1999, reported a total of 6,026 fatal work injuries for calendar year 1998. Since then, an additional 29 job-related fatalities were identified, bringing the total job-related fatality count for 1998 to 6,055.

This release presents the results from the 1999 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), a program conducted jointly with the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Departments of Health, Delaware Department of Labor, and Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. All 50 States and the District of Columbia participate in the CFOI program. The program provides workplace fatality data by occupational, industrial, and demographic characteristics as well as type of event.

Key elements of the results for Philadelphia CMSA and City were as follows:

- On a detailed level, highway-related incidents and falls to a lower level were the leading causes of workplace fatalities in the CMSA in 1999, each accounting for 14 deaths. (See table 1.)
- Robbery was the primary motive of job-related homicides when a motive could be ascertained. The source documents indicated that in the CMSA almost half and in the city four out of five alleged perpetrators were robbers. Almost all of the victims in the CMSA and all in the city were men. Sixty-two percent of the homicide victims worked in retail trade in the CMSA and all worked in retail trade in the city. Four of the five victims in the city worked in drinking places.
- Men accounted for 95 percent of the CMSA work-related fatalities. (See table 2.)
- In the CMSA, 72 percent of those who died due to a workplace injury were white and 19 percent were black. In the city, whites accounted for 48 percent of the deaths and blacks comprised 36 percent.
- Workers aged 25-54 -- the prime working age group -- made up about three-quarters of the CMSA's and city's fatalities in 1999.
- Eighty-seven percent of workers killed on the job in the CMSA and 79 percent in the city worked for wages and salaries.
- Three industry divisions accounted for 60 percent of all work-related fatalities in the CMSA and almost 70 percent the city—construction, services, and retail trade. (See table 3.)
- Special trade contractors within the construction industry sustained 17 fatalities in the CMSA, over half of them due to falls to lower levels.
- Occupational groups with large numbers of fatalities in the CMSA included construction trades (15) and transportation and material moving operations (13). (See table 4.)
- Four specific occupations accounted for about one-fourth of all workplace deaths in the CMSA. Truck drivers had nine fatalities, managers of food serving and lodging establishments accounted for six, and both registered nurses and sales supervisors and proprietors had five.

The CFOI program is designed to provide the safety and health community with verified counts of fatal work injuries as well as basic information on these deaths that can be used to help prevent future fatalities in the workplace.

## **TECHNICAL NOTES**

The source for the tables is the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1999, and the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Departments of Health, Delaware Department of Labor, and Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

Information on fatal occupational injuries was compiled from a variety of administrative sources including death certificates, motor vehicle traffic accident reports, medical examiners reports, State and Federal workers' compensation reports, and other government investigative reports. Each fatality was substantiated by either two independent source documents or one source document and a follow-up questionnaire to the employer or other contact (excluding next-of-kin) who had knowledge about the circumstances of the incident.

## TECHNICAL NOTES -- continued

While the purpose of the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries is to compile a complete count of traumatic workplace fatalities, information was also collected on fatal occupational illnesses that were recognized as work-related or that occurred at work. (There is not necessarily a causal relationship implied for illness deaths occurring at work.) A comprehensive count of fatalities resulting from occupational illnesses cannot be produced from current data largely because of the latency period associated with many occupational illnesses, as well as the difficulty in associating illnesses with exposures in the workplace. Therefore, fatal occupational illnesses are excluded from the tables.

The Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md., CMSA consists of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Atlantic, Cape May, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland.

Table 1. Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, Philadelphia area, 1999

| Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>                                       | Philadelphia-Wilmington- Atlantic City CMSA |         | Philadelphia City |         |
|--|---|---------|-------------------|---------|
|  | Number                                      | Percent | Number            | Percent |
| Total fatalities:.....   | 97  | 100     | 33                | 100     |
| Transportation incidents .....                                       | 22  | 23      | --                | --      |
| Highway.....   | 14  | 14      | --                | --      |
| Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment                         | 8   | 8       | --                | --      |
| Vehicle struck stationary object, equipment<br>on side of road ..... | 5   | 5       | --                | --      |
| Worker struck by vehicle.....  | 3   | 3       | --                | --      |
| Assaults and violent acts .....                                      | 19  | 20      | 9                 | 27      |
| Homicides.....   | 13  | 13      | 5                 | 15      |
| Shootings .....  | 11  | 11      | 5                 | 15      |
| Suicides .....   | 6   | 6       | 4                 | 12      |
| Contact with objects and equipment .....                             | 21  | 22      | 8                 | 24      |
| Struck by object.....  | 9   | 9       | 3                 | 9       |
| Struck by falling object.....  | 4   | 4       | --                | --      |
| Struck by swinging or slipping object .....                          | 3   | 3       | --                | --      |
| Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects                      | 9   | 9       | 3                 | 9       |
| Caught in running equipment or machinery .                           | 7   | 7       | 3                 | 9       |
| Falls.....   | 17  | 18      | 7                 | 21      |
| Fall to lower level.....   | 14  | 14      | 6                 | 18      |
| Fall from ladder .....   | 3   | 3       | --                | --      |
| Fall from roof.....  | 3   | 3       | --                | --      |
| Exposure to harmful substances or environments..                     | 11  | 11      | 4                 | 12      |
| Contact with electric current .....                                  | 4   | 4       | 3                 | 9       |
| Exposure to caustic, noxious,<br>or allergenic substances .....      | 4   | 4       | --                | --      |
| Fires and explosions .....   | 6   | 6       | --                | --      |
| Fire -- unintended or uncontrolled.....                              | 5   | 5       | --                | --      |
| Fire in residence, building, or other structure                      | 4   | 4       | --                | --      |

<sup>1</sup>Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structures.  
(See note at end of tables.)

Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries by selected demographic characteristics, Philadelphia area, 1999

| Characteristic                   | Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City CMSA |         | Philadelphia City |         |
|----------------------------------|--|---------|-------------------|---------|
|                                  | Number                                     | Percent | Number            | Percent |
| Total fatalities:.....           | 97   | 100     | 33                | 100     |
| <u>Employee status</u>           |  |         |                   |         |
| Wage and salary workers.....     | 84   | 87      | 26                | 79      |
| Self-employed <sup>1</sup> ..... | 13   | 13      | 7                 | 21      |
| <u>Sex and age</u>               |  |         |                   |         |
| Men .....                        | 92   | 95      | --                | --      |
| Women .....                      | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Both sexes:                      |  |         |                   |         |
| under 25 years.....              | 6  | 6       | 5                 | 15      |
| 25 to 34 years.....              | 12   | 12      | 3                 | 9       |
| 35 to 44 years.....              | 29   | 30      | 10                | 30      |
| 45 to 54 years.....              | 29   | 30      | 12                | 36      |
| 55 to 64 years.....              | 13   | 13      | 3                 | 9       |
| 65 years and over .....          | 8  | 8       | --                | --      |
| <u>Race</u>                      |  |         |                   |         |
| White .....                      | 70   | 72      | 16                | 48      |
| Black .....                      | 18   | 19      | 12                | 36      |
| Asian .....                      | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Hispanic origin .....            | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |

<sup>1</sup>Includes paid and unpaid family workers, and may include owners of incorporated businesses, or members of partnerships.  
(See note at end of tables.)

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by industry, Philadelphia area, 1999

| Industry                                  | SIC code <sup>1</sup> | Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City CMSA |         | Philadelphia City |         |
|---|-----------------------|--|---------|-------------------|---------|
|   |                       | Number                                     | Percent | Number            | Percent |
| Total fatalities:.....                    |                       | 97   | 100     | 33                | 100     |
| Private sector: .....                     |                       | 89   | 92      | 30                | 91      |
| Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....   |                       | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Construction .....                        |                       | 22   | 23      | 7                 | 21      |
| Heavy construction, except building ..... | 16                    | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Special trade contractors.....            | 17                    | 17   | 18      | 6                 | 18      |
| Masonry, stonework, and plastering .....  | 174                   | 3  | 3       | 3                 | 9       |
| Roofing, siding, and sheet metal work..   | 176                   | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Miscellaneous special trade contractors   | 179                   | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Manufacturing .....                       |                       | 10   | 10      | 5                 | 15      |
| Food and kindred products .....           | 20                    | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Primary metal industries .....            | 33                    | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Blast furnace and basic steel products .. | 331                   | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Transportation and public utilities.....  |                       | 12   | 12      | 3                 | 9       |
| Trucking and warehousing.....             | 42                    | 7  | 7       | --                | --      |
| Trucking and courier services, except air | 421                   | 7  | 7       | --                | --      |
| Water transportation .....                | 44                    | 4  | 4       | --                | --      |
| Water transportation services.....        | 449                   | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Wholesale trade .....                     |                       | 4  | 4       | --                | --      |
| Wholesale trade - nondurable goods.....   | 51                    | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Retail trade.....                         |                       | 17   | 18      | 8                 | 24      |
| Food stores.....                          | 54                    | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Grocery stores .....                      | 541                   | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Eating and drinking places.....           | 58                    | 7  | 7       | 6                 | 18      |
| Miscellaneous retail .....                | 59                    | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Services.....                             |                       | 19   | 20      | 7                 | 21      |
| Amusement and recreation services .....   | 79                    | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Health services.....                      | 80                    | 6  | 6       | 3                 | 9       |
| Hospitals .....                           | 806                   | 4  | 4       | 3                 | 9       |
| Government <sup>2</sup> .....             |                       | 8  | 8       | 3                 | 9       |
| Local .....                               |                       | 6  | 6       | --                | --      |

<sup>1</sup>Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987 Edition.<sup>2</sup>Includes fatalities to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry.  
(See note at end of tables.)

Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries by occupation, Philadelphia area, 1999

| Occupation <sup>1</sup>  | Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City CMSA |         | Philadelphia City |         |
|--|--|---------|-------------------|---------|
|  | Number                                     | Percent | Number            | Percent |
| Total fatalities:.....   | 97   | 100     | 33                | 100     |
| Managerial and professional specialty .....                          | 19   | 20      | 6                 | 18      |
| Executive, administrative, and managerial.....                       | 9  | 9       | 4                 | 12      |
| Managers, food serving<br>and lodging establishments.....            | 6  | 6       | 4                 | 12      |
| Professional specialty occupations .....                             | 10   | 10      | --                | --      |
| Health assessment and treating occupations.                          | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Writers, artists, entertainers .....                                 | 4  | 4       | --                | --      |
| Technical, sales, and administrative support.....                    | 12   | 12      | --                | --      |
| Sales occupations.....   | 7  | 7       | --                | --      |
| Supervisors and proprietors, sales .....                             | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Administrative support occupations,<br>including clerical .....      | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Mail and message distributing occupations..                          | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Service occupations.....   | 11   | 11      | 6                 | 18      |
| Protective service occupations .....                                 | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Firefighting and fire prevention.....                                | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Service occupations,<br>except protective and household .....        | 6  | 6       | 4                 | 12      |
| Cleaning and building service occupations,<br>except household ..... | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations .....                     | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Precision production, craft, and repair .....                        | 22   | 23      | 7                 | 21      |
| Mechanics and repairers .....  | 4  | 4       | --                | --      |
| Mechanics and repairers, except supervisors                          | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Construction trades.....   | 15   | 15      | 4                 | 12      |
| Construction trades, except supervisors .....                        | 13   | 13      | 4                 | 12      |
| Precision production operations .....                                | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |
| Operators, fabricators, and laborers .....                           | 29   | 30      | 12                | 36      |
| Machine operators and tenders, except precision                      | 6  | 6       | --                | --      |
| Machine operators, assorted materials.....                           | 5  | 5       | --                | --      |
| Transportation and material moving operations                        | 13   | 13      | --                | --      |
| Motor vehicle operators.....   | 10   | 10      | --                | --      |
| Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers,<br>and laborers .....         | 10   | 10      | 8                 | 24      |
| Construction laborers.....   | 4  | 4       | 3                 | 9       |
| Freight, stock, and material handlers .....                          | 3  | 3       | 3                 | 9       |
| Laborers, except construction.....                                   | 3  | 3       | --                | --      |

<sup>1</sup>Based on the 1990 Occupational Classification System developed by the Bureau of the Census.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals due to rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.